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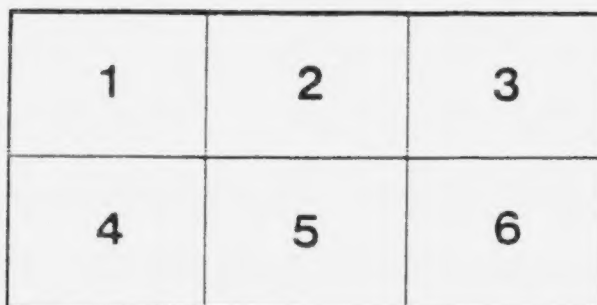
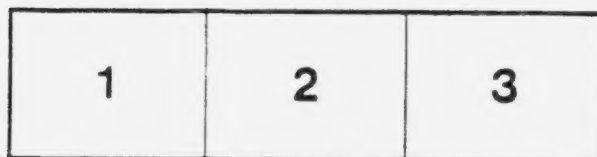
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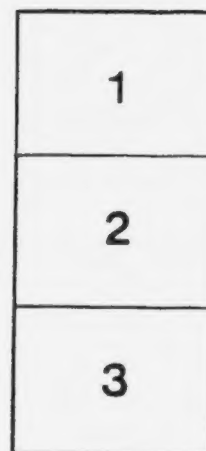
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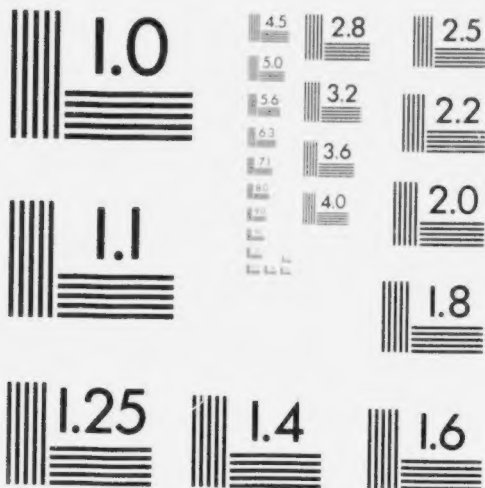
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*James Fitz-James*

# Bahamian Folk Lore

*By*  
*James Fitz-James*

*Illustrations by*  
*H. A. P.*

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MONTREAL

1906

GR121

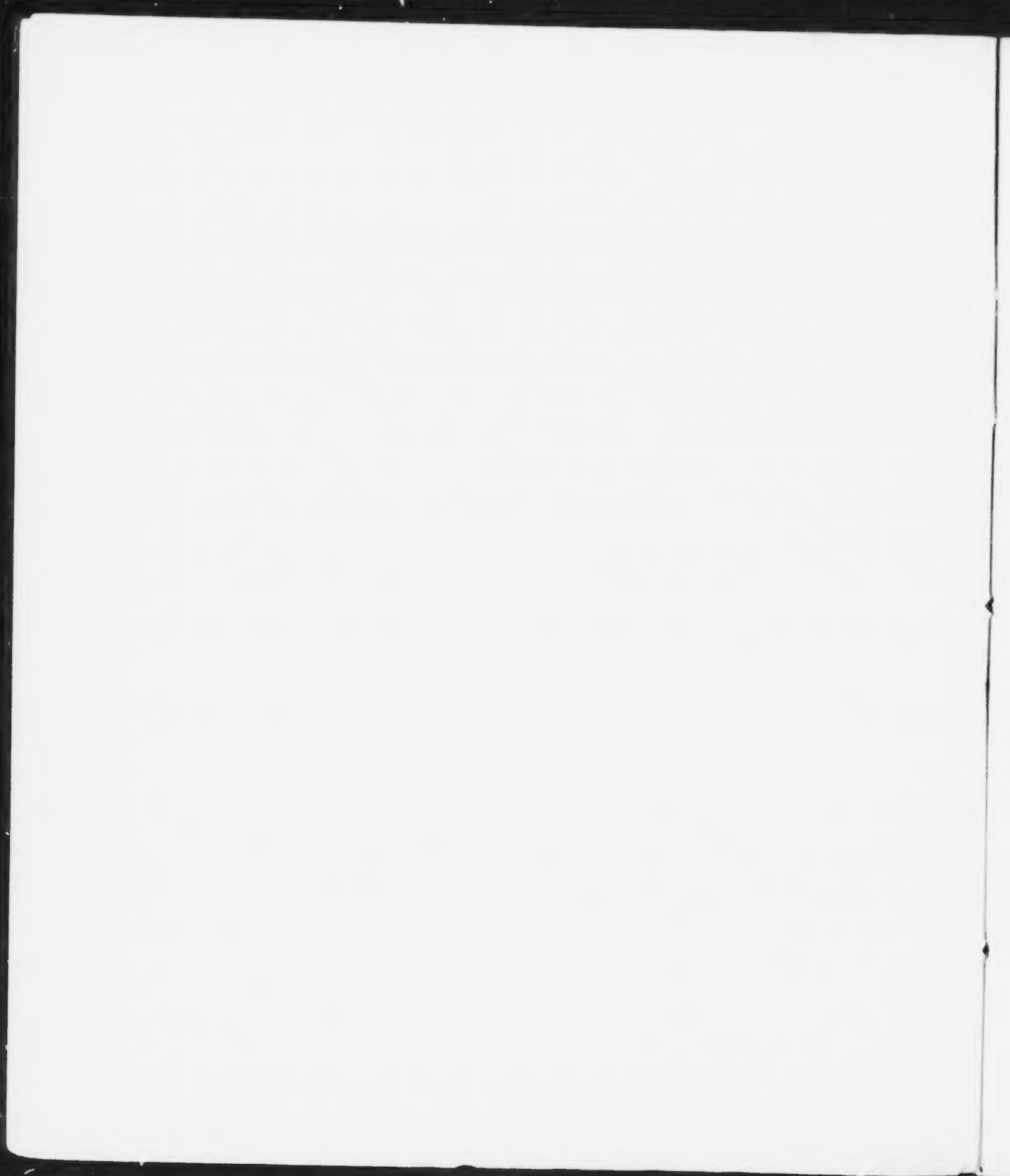
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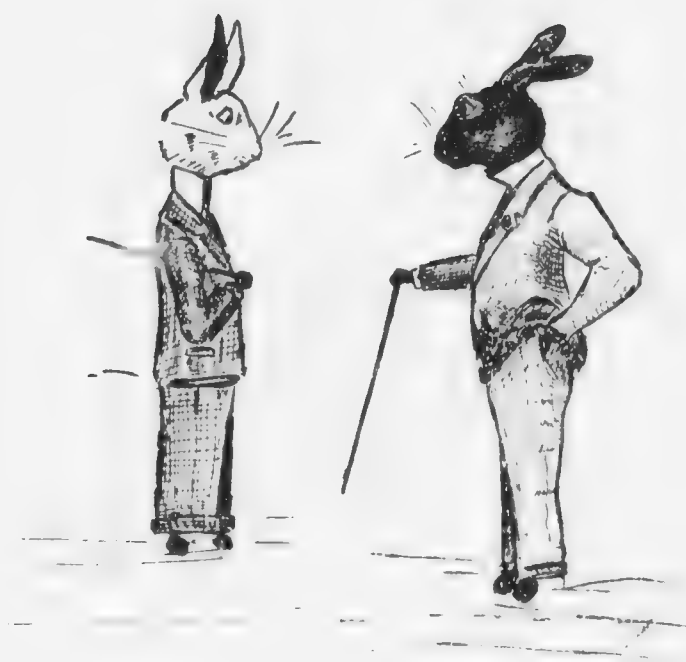
Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the  
year 1906, at the Department of Agriculture.

DEDICATED  
TO MY DAUGHTER



# The Summer-House







## The Summer-House

**W**E were spending the winter in Nassau, the capital of the Bahama Islands, and having little to do and less inclination to do even that little, we were often to be found lolling idly in the summer-house that over-hangs the harbour at the foot of the garden belonging to Marine Villa. A delightful way of spending the time is this same

sitting idle, watching the boats in harbour, as they, too, fritter away the warm sunny hours.

Mr. H——, who is dearly loved by the “coloured” people, was expounding his theories as to the best way of elevating the race, and we had become much interested in his attitude towards them, as also in theirs towards him. He is “Fader” to them all, both old and young, as they button-hole him to tell him their little joys and great sorrows, particularly the latter.

As we sat fanned by a soft breeze, I said, “I wish I could get some of these negroes to tell me stories. They must know plenty, and I suppose that as books become more attainable the old stories will disappear.”

“Yes,” said Mr. H——, they are disappearing now, and already the people are beginning to be a little ashamed of them.”

“What a pity,” I remarked. “Where and from whom could I hear them? Could you not

induce some of your friends to talk to me?"  
"Probably I could," he answered. "They are rather shy with strangers, but—"

He stopped abruptly, and shading his eyes with his hand exclaimed, "Why we are in luck if I am not mistaken. Hello, Charlie! Hello, Bill! In from the Out Islands?"

At that moment a small boat with a large sail drifted towards us and a tall negro with a bucket in his hand drew himself up slowly and looked at us.

"Dat yo', Fader?" he called in answer. "Ya-a-s, I's here. Jus' some from Abaco wid sponges. 'Nough way, Bill," he shouted, and as the boat grazed the supports of the summer-house, he sprang up and balanced himself adroitly on the railing.

He was dressed in a rough upper garment, and a pair of trousers somewhat the worse for wear, through the holes of which we had glimpses of what appeared to be an old edition

of the Stars and Stripes; but we could not be quite sure.

"What's that you're wearing, Charlie?" said Mr. H——, by way of opening up the subject, "A flag?"

"S'pose dat mus' be my shirt," said Charlie, unblushingly tucking in odd corners, and taking a hitch in his trousers' supports. Sam Hernandez, who had just arrived with a message, grinned broadly. He was a Nassonian, and earned good money.

"You needn't wait, Bill," said Mr. H——. "Charlie and Sam are going to stay and tell us some stories, and you can sail up and down, and come back by and bye. Now, Charlie, tell us a story."

But Charlie was seized with a fit of shyness.

"I don't know no story, Fader."

"Oh, yes, you do. Tell us about Ber Lobster first."

"I don' know 'bout Ber Lobster."

"Well, tell us Ber Horse then."

"I don' know Ber Horse."

"Yas, yo' do, Charlie," said Bill with a grin. "Go awn. 'Once 'pon a time's a berry good time '—go awn, Charlie."

"I don' know——"

"Don' be fool, Charlie. Yo' know—'Once 'pon a time;'" go awn——"

Thus encouraged, Charlie's memory revived, and he began in the orthodox and only way.

I must here explain that all Bahamian negro stories begin and end with a rhyme of some sort, and the way to quicken the story-telling vein among a group of natives is to begin the rhyme. That being fairly started, story follows story, each man vieing with his neighbor to tell the best.

Charlie thought for a moment, and then began the story.



# The Race between Brother Horse and Brother Conch





## The Race between Ber Horse and Ber Conch

*Once 'pon a time was a berry good time,  
Monkey chew terbacco en spit white lime,  
Cockroach keep time ;  
Bullfrog jump from bank to bank,  
En he hin' quattah don' touch wattah.*

**O**NCE 'pon a time Ber Horse en Ber Conch was courtnin' to de King's daughteh. Dey both done ax her, but she won' say which ob de two she like bes'. Den Ber Horse call Ber Conch, en say :

" Ber Conch, lemme en yo' run a race, en de one dat beat kin hab de King's daughteh," says he.

"Dat's right," says Ber Conch. "Dat's good idee," says he.

Well, dey talk en dey talk twel fin'lly dey make out dat de race be fo' ten mile en back agin to de King's daughteh house.

"Yo' kin run de whole way widout stoppin', Ber Conch," says Ber Horse, "en so kin I," says he.

"I don' like dat," says Ber Conch. "Yo' got mo' longer laigs den me, en kin run mo' faster. Lemme run de ten mile widout stoppin', en yo' kin run one mile en den stop en eat a bun'le ob blade (bunch of corn stalks) en drink a bucket ob wattah, den run nudder mile en stop en do de same ting, twel yo' done it ten times."

So dey settle it dat way, en Ber Conch was to blow he shell at de en' ob ebery mile, but Ber Horse he mus' sing a song.

Well, de mawnin' dey was to sta't, Ber Horse en Ber Conch come to de King's daugh-

teh house. Ber Conch was all trim up wid conch pearls en sea-weed, en he sot in de King's daughteh lap lookin' fine. Ber Horse was all fix up wid ribbons on he mane en tail, en he shine all over en look fine too.

Berry soon dey sta't, en Ber Horse he run fas' twel he come to de firs' mile. He eat de bun'le blade en drink de bucket wattah. Den he lif' up he haid en sing,

*"Alle, Alle, oh! Been in de walley, salley, oh!  
Swear by Jove en monkey all de islan' perie."  
(perish.)*

Ber Conch he blow he shell, "F-r-r-r-r-r-a-a-h!"

Ber Horse don' like dat, it soun' so loud en neah, so he run de nex' mile mo' hawder, en eat blade en drink wattah en sing agin.

*"Alle, alle, oh! Been in de walley, salley, oh!  
Swear by Jove en monkey all de islan' perie."*

Den Ber Conch shell soun' jus' de same  
neah en loud, "F-r-r-r-r-a a-h!"

Ber Horse he gettin' very wahm, but he let  
out fer nudder mile, en eat blade quick, en drink  
wattah quick, en sing same's befo'.

Ber Conch blow shell, "F r-r-r-a-a-h!"

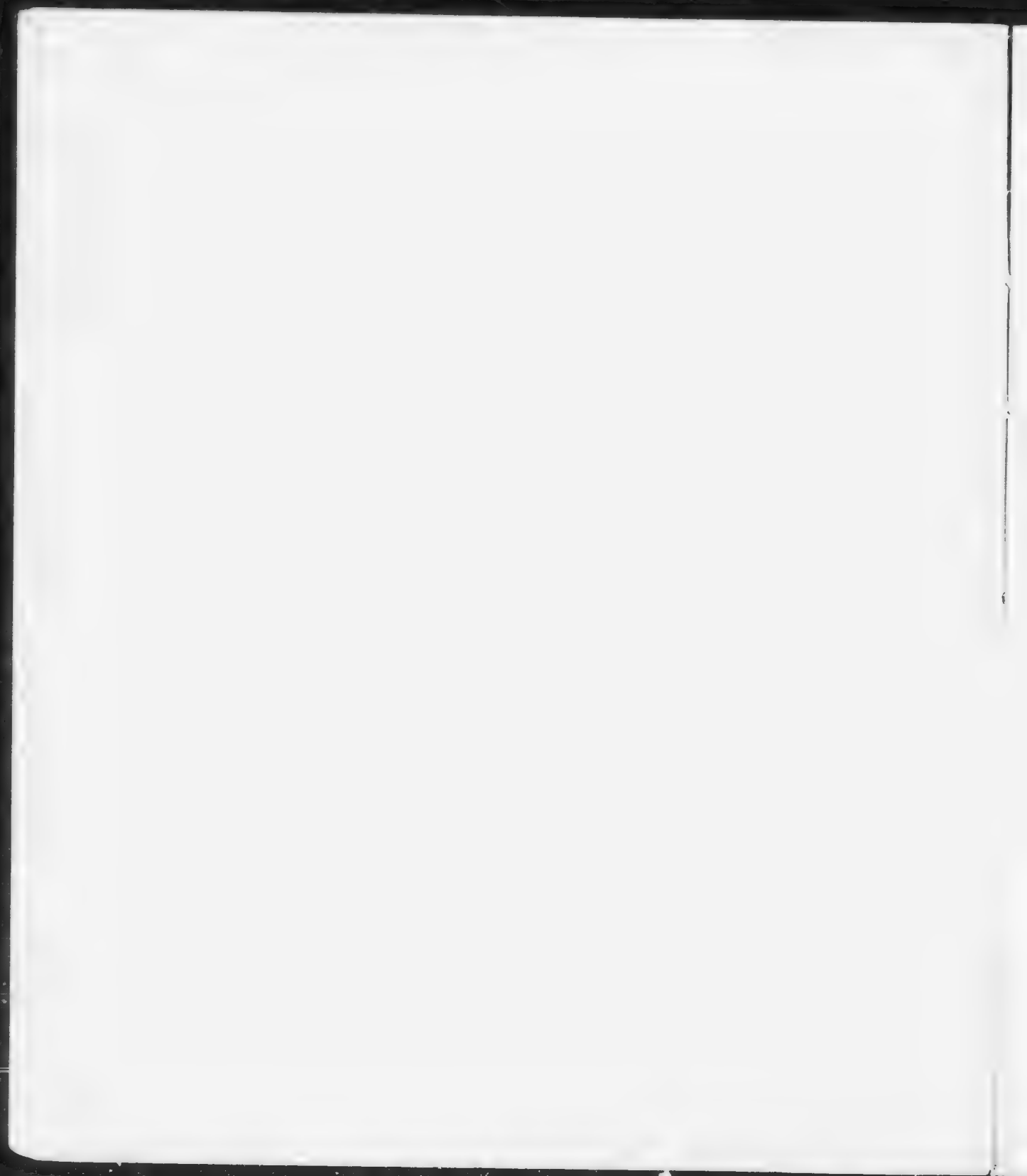
Ebery ting happen de same way twel bime-  
bye, Ber Horse done finish de ten mile. Den he  
stretch heself, en run like debbil twel he git to  
King's daughteh house, all tired en sweaty, en  
all he purty ribbin gone. Den he go to de do'  
en look in en see Ber Conch settin' in de King's  
daughteh lap, en laughin' en shakin' he pearls  
en seaweed.

Den Ber Horse git mad 'cause he see he  
been fool', en he lif' up he hoof en paw Ber  
Conch off de King's daughteh lap on de flo', en  
mash him fine as flour, en den eat him.

Sence den iron done break conch, en conch  
is good fer to eat.

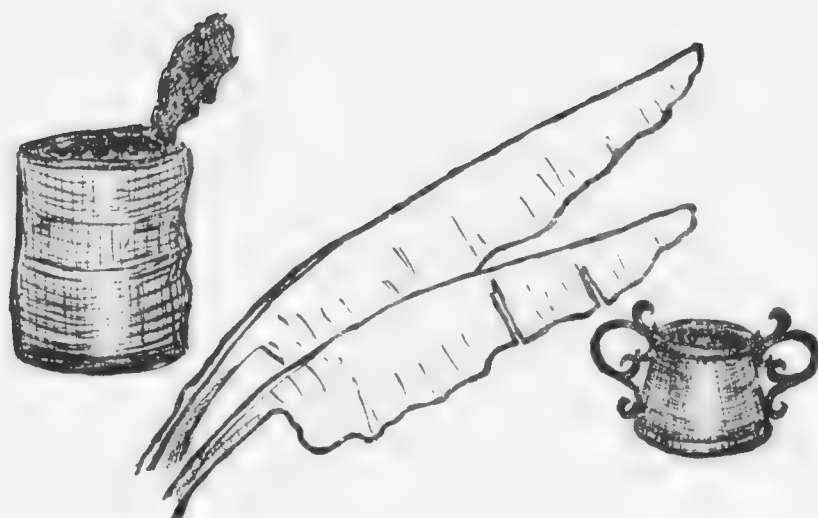
*Ebo Ben, my story's en' ;  
Ef yo' don' b'lieve it true,  
Ax de capt'n ob de long-boat crew.*

Charlie sat for a few moments eyeing us warily to see if by any chance we were laughing at him, and perceiving that there was no trace of mockery in our attitude, he smiled a capacious smile, and looked round for Bill. But Bill had basely deserted his brother, and was sailing far and wide over the harbor. In the meanwhile Hernandez, in a soft voice, and with eyes that gazed dreamily over the water, began his story which at once claimed Charlie's wrapt attention.



The Courting of Brother Rabbit  
and Brother Bookie





## The Courtnin' of Ber Rabbie and Ber Bookie

*Once 'pon a time's a berry good time,  
Monkey chew terbacco en spit white lime,  
Cockroach keep time.*

Once upon a time Ber Rabbie en Ber Bookie went courtnin' Miss Meadowses gals. Dey walk 'long de road togedder, en Ber Rabbie smile to heself en pull he whiskuses, en tink he de winnin' man 'cause he all dress up in white canvas clo'es, en Ber Bookie had only on an ole crocus suit (old potato bag).

When dey come to Miss Meadowses house, Ber Rabbie step out en knock at de do' wid he hin' laig, en when de do' open dey smell nice

big pot pease en rice dat Miss Meadowses gals  
done cookin', en Ber Rabbie say,

"Please, man, kin yo' give us a coal to light  
a fiah wid, so we kin cook," says he.

Den de gals go in en bring out five coal, en  
han' it to him.

When de do' done close agin, Ber Rabbie  
go over to de wattah hole (the well), en throw  
in de coal, en go back to de house, lookin' dis-  
'pointed, en say,

"Sorry to trouble yo,' man, but I don'  
know what de mattah wid dat coal yo' give us,  
'cause it done go out. Kin yo' please give us a  
match?"

Den Miss Meadowses gal say suttinly she  
kin, en run in de house. Soon she come back,  
en say, "Heah's yo' match," says she, en give it  
to him, en close de do' agin.

Den Ber Rabbie laugh, en wunk at Ber  
Bookie, en throw de match in de wattah hole too.

After dat Ber Rabbie en Ber Bookie set on de well, hangin' dey haid en lookin' like dey neber eat nuffin. Bimeby de gals come peekin' out behin' de curtain, en dey see Ber Rabbie en Ber Bookie lookin' like dey got de interjection (indigestion), en dey go out en ax dem ef dey won' come in en help eat de pease en rice, dey done cook.

Den Ber Rabbie en Ber Bookie say dey much 'bleege fer de kin'ness.

One ob de gals ax, "What I gwine call yo'?" says she.

Ber Rabbie say he name "Master Ranger, but Ber Bookie jus' 'Bookie,' in he ole crocus suit."

De gals make great 'miration at Ber Rabbie, en give him a big gol' cup to drink he tea, en a fine plate to eat off, but dey don' tink much ob Ber Bookie, en he cnly git he tea in a ole can, en he pease en rice on a banana leaf, but

dey all talk en laugh en make great merimen' 'mongs' deyselves.

Presen'ly Ber Rabbie jump up, en 'low dat they mus' be gittin' home, en he look at he watch. Den he sta't, en go pull back de curtain from de winder, en say,

"Law, Miss Meadows, but it done git da'k. I don't know how we gwine ter git home, hit so far."

Den de gals giggle, en Miss Meadows up en say, "Won't yo' spen' de night heah, Mister Ranger?" says she.

Ber Rabbie 'spon', "We mos' 'bleege, fer Ber Bookie ain't so soupplous (supple) es he was, en we ain't nebber git home in de da'k," says he.

"Come dis away, en I show yo' de bes' room," says one ob de gals, en she open de do' en Ber Rabbie en Ber Bookie go in.

Den dey ondress deyselves en lay down, en soon Ber Rabbie done been soun' 'sleep. Den

Ber Bookie set up on de bed en listen twel he heah Ber Rabbie bref comin' quiet. Den he tuk en crope out, en tuk de nice canvas clo'es en dirty dem all up wid dirt. Den he git back in bed en slep till mawnin,' en git up en go fer he tea, en git it in de same old can. But Ber Rabbie don' wake up.

Bimeby de gals go en knock at he do, en say: "Mister Ranger, Mister Ranger, tea ready."

Ber Rabbie say, "I soon be dar, yadies" (ladies).

So dey set en wait, but Ber Rabbie don' come.

Pretty soon dey knock agin, en ax him don' he wan' no tea, en Ber Rabbie say, "Soon come, soon come."

All de time he lookin' at he nice suit ob clo'es all spoil wid dirt. He wonder who done it, en say to heself, "It can't be Bier (brother.) Bier wouldn't do me so," en he put he han' on

he haid like he done got muragic (neuralgia).

Jus' den de gals knock en say, "Tea gettin' col', Mister Ranger."

Den Ber Rabbie git mad, en holler, "Damn it, I soon be dar."

De gals giggle, en run 'way en wait, but he don' come. Bimeby one de gals say, "Shuly, day's sometin' de mattah wid' Mister Ranger."

"I'se gwine ter see," say nudder, en dey go en push open de do.'

Den dey screech en scream, fer dar was Ber Rabbie widout no clo'es on.

So he tuk en jump out de winder en run like Ber Debbil.

So Ber Bookie stay courtnin', en marry one ob Miss Meadowses gals, but nudder time Ber Rabbie git even wid' him.

*Ebo Ben, now my story's en,'*

*Ef yo' don' b'lieve it true,*

*Ax de capt'n ob de long-boat crew.*

The ball was fairly rolling now. Charlie's black eyes glittered as he rolled them from side to side, and laughed gleefully at the thought of his next story.

"I don' know if I nebber tol' youse de story of Ber Elephan', he remarked facetiously.

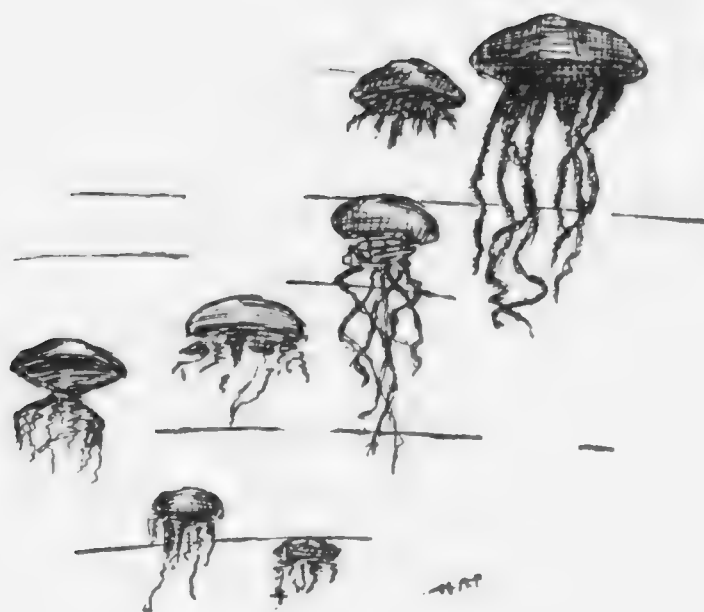
Mr. H—— looked inquiringly at me, as if he were not altogether sure himself.

"No," I answered, "I don't think you mentioned that gentleman before."

"Well, I's tell yo' now," said Charlie, grinning and wagging his head from side to side.



Brother Elephant and  
Brother Paroquet





## Ber Elephan' en Ber Parokee

*Once 'pon a time was a berry good time,  
Monkey chew terbacco en spit white lime,  
Cockroach keep time;  
Bullfrog jump from bank to bank,  
En he hin' quattah don' touch wattah.*

**O**NCE upon a time Ber Elephan' en Ber Parokee was courtnin,' de same gal.

Ber Parokee use' to go to see de gal at two o'clock, en Ber Elephan' wen' at t'ree o'clock, so Ber Elephan' don' know dat Ber Parokee was courtnin' de same gal, 'cause he

fly away first ting when he heah Ber Elephan' comin.'

One day Ber Elephan's watch go wrong, en he go courtnin' earlier den he 'custom' to, en meet Ber Parokee jus' flyin' out ob de do,' en he git mad en say, "What yo' doin' courtnin' my gal, Ber Parokee?" says he.

Ber Parokee suck he teef en laugh.

Dat make Ber Elephan' madder dan befo,' en he up en say, "I bet yo' I mash yo' up as fine as flour," says he.

Ber Parokee flip he wing in Ber Elephan' face, en 'spon', "Go way man. I know one trick wort' ten ob dat," says he, en den he go home en leave Ber Elephan' to run de gal dat dey.

De nex' day Ber Elephan' fin' him dere agin, en try to catch him wid he trunk, but Ber Parokee fly out de little window en sot up in a big tree singin' beautiful, wid de gal listenin.'

Ber Elephan' couldn't climb de tree so he

lie down underneath', en bimebye he fall soun  
'sleep.

Den Ber Parokee tuk en crope in Ber Ele-  
phan's eah, en sing out:

*"An-a-Bo-Bo kinney, an-a-Bo-Bo Barber.  
An-a-Bo-Bo jump on grip an-a-yapay.  
An-a R.O. Jippie, an-a Ebo John."*

Ber Elephan' brush he eah en say,  
"Humph! I dunno w'at dis in my eah."

Ber Parokee sing, "*R. O. Jippie an-a Ebo  
John.*"

Den Ber Elephan' broke off runnin'.

Bimebye he meet Ber Horse, en Ber Horse  
say, "What big man like yo' runnin' so fer?"

Ber Elephan' say, "I heah sign." (Warnin'?).

Ber Parokee sing, "*An-a-Bo-Bo kinne-  
a-Bo-Bo Barber.*"

Den Ber Horse git alarm' too, en he broke  
off runnin'.

Pretty soon dey meet Ber Cow (the Baha-

mian negroes do not use the word "sister" in their stories; "brother" serves for both genders), en Ber Cow say, "Eh! eh! Ber, what yo runnin' so fer?"

Ber Elephan' 'spon', "Man, I heah sign."

Ber Parokee sing, "*An-a-yapay John.*" en Ber Cow he run.

Den dey meet Ber Rabbie, en Ber Rabbie say, "Ber Elephan,' what de mattah? What make yo' run so?"

Ber Elephan' say, "Man, I can't tell yo'."

Jus' den Ber Parokee sing out loud, "*An-a jump on grip, an-a-yapay,*" en Ber Rabbie sta't on de run too.

Pretty quick dey meet Ber Terapin, en Ber Terapin say, "Man, what yo' runnin' fer?"

Ber Elephan' say, "Dey's sometin' in my eah."

Ber Parokee shout, "*An-a R.O. Jippie an-a Ebo John.*"

Den Ber Terapin ax Ber Elephan' to ben'

down he haid, en he shove he han' into Ber Elephan' eah, en haul out Ber Parokee, en say, "Dis de man makin' yo' all run so."

Ber Elephan' stan' t'inkin'. Den he 'low he been done beat, so he shake Ber Parokee by de han', en say, "Yo' kin take de gal."

*Ebo Ben, my story's en' ;  
Ef yo' don' b'lieve it true,  
Ax de capt'n ob de long-boat crew.*

"Well, Charlie," I cried, "I think Ber Elephant was a wise old fellow. Took his beating like a man, didn't he?"

"Dunno," said Charlie reflectively, "I's tink he was gettin' tired ob dat gal, en done see nudder one he like bettah."

"Perhaps," I said doubtfully; "or he may have seen the girl I saw last Sunday with the yellow dress on."

Charlie gave me a sharp look. Was I making fun of him? No, I looked serious. Sam

grinned. "I's see her," he said. "She had yallah dress en fine red ribbins."

"Same girl," said Mr. H——; "and a mighty fine looker too."

Charlie looked pathetic. He had not seen her, and felt the loss keenly.

"Never mind, Charlie," said Mr. H——, "I'll show her to you next Sur.day, when you've got your smart clothes on."

"I's come good en early," answered Charlie, quite restored to good spirits.

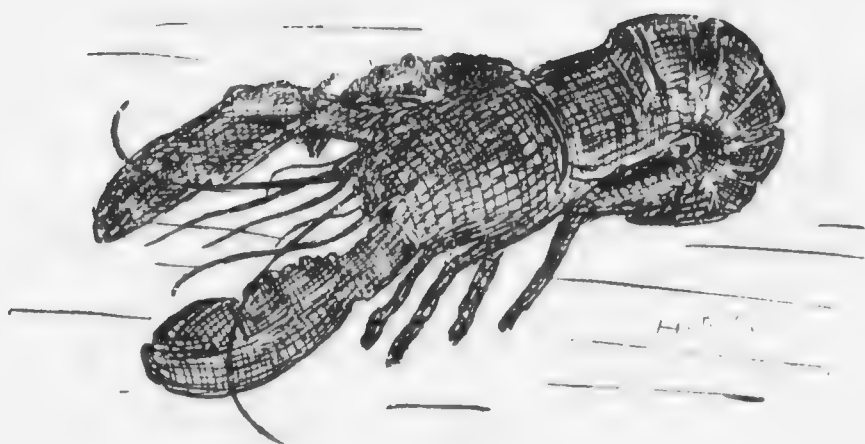
By this time Hernandez was mellow for another story. Mr. H—— signed to me to drop conversation, and remarked, "What was that story about Ber Debbil and Ber Lobster. You remember that one, Sam?"

Sam nodded his head.

"Go awn," said Charlie.

Brother Devil and Brother  
Lobster





## Ber Debbil en Ber Lobster

*Once 'pon a time was a berry good time ;  
Ber Monkey chew opium en give a good rhyme.*

**O**NCE upon a time Ber Debbil was to give a dance, but he ain't give it, 'cause he fine gol' drum been tief (stolen), so he ain't got no music.

Ber Debbil had a vife en a daughtah, ed de day he gwine to sen' de invitation, he say to he vife, " Ber Vife, Ber Vife, how much tas' ('task' a quarter of an acre) yo' tink yo' kin veed in a day? "

He vife say, " Ef I tell yo' de trufe I kin

veed eight tas', en ef I tell yo' a lie. I kin veed nine."

Den Ber Debbil say, "Git to wuk quick," en he vife ben' over en sta't to veed de tas'.

Den he call he daughtah, en say, "My daughtah, my daughtah, how much tas' yo' kin veed in a day?"

En he daughtah say, "Ef I tell yo' de trufe I kin veed seven tas', en ef I tell yo' a lie I kin veed eight."

Den Ber Debbil say same like befo', "Git to wuk quick."

Den he wen' under a tree en set down to watch he vife en he daughtah wuk.

Whiles he was settin' dere smokin' he pipe, Ber Lobster crope out ob de hole en came to Ber Debbil house, but Ber Debbil don' see him, en he go in by de back do' en tief de gol' drum.

When he git a li'l' way off he begin to play de drum en sing:

*Nannie bo-vay, bo-vay, bo-vay,  
Nannie bo-bo timmininee,  
Dung-de-lung-dung, dung-de-lung-dung.*

Ber Debbil vife call, "My husban', my husban', I heah de gol' drum."

Ber Debbil don' like bein' disturb when he smokin, en he say, "Ef I go home en don' meet no one dere, den I come back en cut yo' haid off."

So he go home, but he don' meet no one dere, 'cause Ber Lobster ain't make no noise where he hide 'cep' li'l' cracklin' soun' like de fiah.

Ber Debbil go back to he vife en cut her haid off wid he cutlash, en set down agin under de tree, en fill he pipe, en smoke wid he eye shut, only when he look to see how he daughtah gittin' on wid de tas'.

Bimebye Ber Lobster beat de drum agin en sing loud:

*Nannie bo-vay, bo-vay, bo-vay,*

*Nannie bo-bo timmininee,*

*Dung-de-lung-dung, dung-de-lung-dung."*

Debbil daughtah stop wukin', en stan' listenin'.

Debbil say, "Go on wid yo' tas'."

Den he daughtah say, "My pa, my pa, yo' kill my ma, but I is heah de gol' drum."

Ber Debbil git angry, en say, "Ef I go home en fin' no one dere, I come back en cut yo' haid off."

So he go to de house en don' fin' no one dere, en he was mad, en go back en cut off he daughtah haid wid he cutlash.

Soon after dat he done smoke out he pipe, en presen'ly he heah de gol' drum he-self, en he look all roun', en see Ber Lobster wid he drum playin' en singin'.

*Nannie bo-vay, bo-vay, bo-vay,  
Nannie bo-bo timmininee,  
Dung-de-lung-dung, dung-de-lung-dung.*

So he call to Ber Lobster, "Bring me dat  
gol' drum, Ber Lobster."

But Ber Lobster only beat de drum en sing  
he song agin.

Den Ber Debbil chase Ber Lobster to git he  
drum, en Ber Lobster run fer he hole, still play-  
in' en singin',

*Nannie bo-vay, bo-vay, bo-vay,  
Nannie bo-bo timmininee,  
Dung-de-lung-dung, dung-de-lung-dung.*

On de way he meet Ber Vipray en Ber  
Stingray, en he put each at he do', one at he  
back do' en one at he front do'.

When Ber Debbil git to de front do', Ber  
Vipray cut him crost de face. Den he go to de

back do', en Ber Stingray stick him so haud  
dat de spring he take make so much win' it  
blow me heah to tell yo' dis story.

*Giddy, giddy gout, story is out  
One mile in en two mile out.*

"I wish we had as good luck in eluding  
our devils as Ber Lobster had," said Mr. H —.

"I don' s'pose it happen like dat dese  
days," said Sam. "Don' seem de same some-  
how."

"Don' nebber see Ber Debbil," said Charlie  
with conviction.

"Do you remember the story about Ber  
Rabbie and the Girl, Charlie? Tell us that one  
before you go."

"All right," said Charlie, now quite alive  
to his importance. "Ber Debbil ain't much  
'count anyway, eh, Fader?"

# Cadoel





## Cadoel

*Once 'pon a time was a berry good time.*

**O**NCE 'pon a time a man buil' a fine house.  
en he name he do' Cadoel. When he  
wan' to go out he say, "Open, Cadoel,  
open," en de do' open, en when he done gone  
out he say, "Shut, Cadoel, shut" en de do'  
shut.

Ber Rabbie live in he house neali by, en he  
heah de man sayin' dese words.

One day dis man cook a big pot pease en rice, en den go out wid he vife en daugteh to wuk on de farm. While he was gone Ber Rabbie go to he house en say, "Open, Cadoel, open." Den de do' open en Ber Rabbie go in. He go lopin' roun' de house, en presen'ly he smell de good dinnah, en he open de pot en tas' some. Hit so good dat he go on eatin' twel bimeby he done eat it all up en only leave a little pot-cake, (the browned scrapings round the edges of the pan).

Now de man had two drums in he house, a big one en a little one. When Ber Rabbie done eatin' he pick up de little drum en beat it. De little drum say, "Yo' eat yo' bellyful, yo' better go way."

Ber Rabbie say, "Yo' ain't got a good way, yo' ain't got a good way," en he put de little drum back.

Den he pick up de big drum en beat dat.

De big drum say, "Yo' eat yo' bellyful, yo' better sit down."

Jus' at dat minit de man come home en call out, "Open, Cadoel, open."

Ber Rabbie get scare en run under de bed, en de man come in wid he vife en daughteh. He open de pot to get he dinnah, en all de nice pease en rice was out, en only a little pot-cake lef.' So he give he vife en he little gal a plate ob pot-cake. Den de little gal sot down on de aige of de bed to eat her dinnah, en tuk up a piece. Ber Rabbie pinch her laig en hol' up he han' fer some, en she give it to him. He eat dat quick, en pinch agin, twel it was all gone.

Den de little gal up en say, "My pa, my pa, gimme some mo' pot-cake."

Her pa say, "Chil', yo' look like yo' feedin' death. I's nebber see yo' eat so."

De li'l' gal 'spon', "One man under de bed pinchin' my laig en ax me give him some."

Den her pa run to de bed en lif' de sheet, en  
dar set Ber Rabbie lickin' he han', en smackin'  
he lip. When he see de big man lookin' he give  
one boun', en run to de do' en shout:

"Open, Cabarja, open," but de do' don'  
open.

Den de li'l' gal say, "No; open, Cadoel,  
open," en de do' fly open, en Ber Rabbie tuk en  
let out t'rough dat do', en streak fer he house,  
en de man ain't catch him yet.

*Ebo Ben, my story en' ;*

*Ef yo' don' b'lieve it true,*

*Ax de captain ob de long-boat crew.*

Just as Charlie finished his recital four bells  
sounded from the deck of the "Richmond." He  
rose quickly, and, espying Bill not far off, he

shouted, "I's tink we don' get no pease en rice ef yo' don' come mighty quick."

"What yo' mean speakin' to big man like me dat away," laughed Bill. "I's had my pease en rice w'ile yo' doin de talkin', en lef' plenty pot-cake fer yo'."

"Good-night, Charlie," we cried, as he swung himself lightly into his boat again. "Come another day, and we'll make some nice pease and rice for you, and give it to you on a gold plate too."

Charlie chuckled as the little boat slid away towards the big sponger.

Hernandez smiled as he rose from the bench where he had been sitting.

"I's tink I come too fer a little pot cake on de banana leaf," he said with his soft laugh.

Then the gong sounded from the dining-room, and we hurried off to dress for dinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

At ten o'clock the following night, exhausted by the heat, I sauntered down to the foot of the neighbouring garden belonging to Palm Villa, and flung myself on the steps of the sea wall.

Across the face of the full moon filmy clouds were flitting. The little waves lapped the steps with a hollow sough. Large phosphorescent fish appeared unexpectedly out of the dark waters, to pass next moment into oblivion. A tiny fish set up an uncertain headlight to inspect some tempting morsel. Behind me the palm fans flipped their shredded ribbons sharply in the breeze, and far away on the long white island beach the surf beat heavily. Presently a little tug-boat crept mysteriously by with its luminous streamer of smoke. I heard a sailor cry, "Ship ahoy!" and then the swish of the boat sculled by his shipmate from a "sponger," that was swaying with the tide. The voices died away, and once more silence

reigned. A star shot across the sky, leaving for a second a burning trail.

Then a patter of bare feet sounded on the sea wall. "Is that you, Ned!" I cried.

"Yas. I'se jus' come to tell yo' good night," answered a low, kindly voice.

"Sit down, Ned, and talk awhile. You've come too late to sail. You must come earlier to-morrow night. I'll be saying, 'Ebo Ben, my story's en', very soon now Ned."

Ned looked at me reproachfully. "Why yo' don' stay," he said.

"Ah! well, Ned, most good things come to an end, don't they, and that's just what's happening to my visit." Then I bethought me, and said more cheerfully:

"Once upon a time's a very good time——"

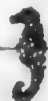
Ned understood me thoroughly, and sat looking first at the moon and then at me. I

watched him expectantly. Finally he gave way, and with a low chuckle, said:

“Well, I done got one mo’ dat yo’ don’ nebber heah yet.” He settled himself more comfortably, and began the tale.

# Brother Cat and Brother Dog





## Ber Cat en Ber Dawg

*Once 'pon a time was a berry good time,  
Monkey chew terbacco en spit white lime,  
Cockroach keep time ;  
Bullfrog jump from bank to bank,  
En he hin' quattah don' touch wattah.*

Dey was one mawnin' w'en all de hawn animals make up dey min's to go on picnic to Hog Islan', jes' to give deyselves de 'sperience ob some 'musement. W'iles dey makin' dey 'rangements Ber Cat was settin' on de wall neah by, en he heah all dose animals got ter say fo' deyselves, en he done make up he min' dat he gwine ter jine dat picnic heself. So he tuk en clomb down de almon' tree dat hang 'crost de wall, en he walk sof' en quiet out ob de back gate wit he tail holt up in de aiah.

Jes' at dat minit Ber Dawg come lopin' along wit he tongue hangin' out lik' he mighty wahm, en wipin' de 'spiration off from he brow wit he raid bandana.

"Howdy, Ber Cat," says Ber Dawg. "How yo' comin' 'long dis mawnin'?" says he.

"Po'rly, ver' po'rly, en dat I 'low," says Ber Cat. "I sufferin' fo' want ob bref dis blessed day. Dey ain't no win' lef' in Nassau."

Den Ber Dawg 'low dat Ber Cat speak gospel truf. "Ef we wus to de islan' we fin' plenty win,' en fruits ter cool de insides, wi' no pusson ter 'spute de pickin'," says Ber Dawg, says he.

Den Ber Cat heave perdijus sigh lak' he much relieve, en up en spon,' "Dat's jes' w'at I finkin Ber Dawg. Dis mawnin' I heah all de hawn animals makin' dey 'rangements fer a picnic, en we mus' git hawns, en 'joy ourselves same's de res'."

"W'ere yo' done git hawns, Ber Cat?" says Ber Dawg.

"Git 'long, Ber Dawg," says Ber Cat: "Don' yo' know dat deys plenty hawns lyin' 'roun' to de slaughtah house, w'ere dey done kill Ber Cow yestiday."

"Yo's right," says Ber Dawg lickin' he mouf en wipin' he brow 'gin. "Le's mak' de mos' ob de time en not be lef' behin'," says he.

Den dey sot off like dey was chase hy Ber Debbil. When dey got to de do' de slaughtah house dey ain't no pusson 'roun' fer to ax dem 'howdy,' so dey jes' tuk en crope into de caw-nah, we're de butchah done frow de hawns.

"Heah's de hawns fo' me," says Ber Dawg, slippin' he han's 'mong's de heap en s'lectin'; "en dere's yo's, Ber Cat," says he.

Ber Cat 'spicion dat Ber Dawg done try foolie foolie, en he done shake de hawns. Den he holt dem up en say, "How dey set, Ber Dawg?" says he.

Ber Dawg roll he eyes, en 'spon', "Lawd, Ber Cat, but yo' mak' me trim'lous. Dey sets jes' es ef dey done grow dere," says he.

Den Ber Cat tie on Ber Dawg hawns, en Ber Dawg he tie on Ber Cat hawns en dey feel mighty gran', en stat's off on de picnic, like dey was Ber Cow en Ber Goat deyselves.

When dey git on de boat dey talk biggoty, en scotch behin' de eyah, en rub de hawn 'gin de mas' lik' de oder animals. Bimeby Ber Dawg rub too hawd, en de hawns git shakety.

Ber Cat say under he bref, "Ber Dawg, Ber Dawg, lemme fix yo' hawns fo' yo', my frien'," says he sof' en kin'ly.

Ber Dawg ben' fo'ard, en say he much 'bleege.

Den Ber Cat done loose de hawns, en knock dem inter de wattah. Ber Dawg git up en cust, en he foller dem overboa'd, brigger-de-boom.

When he blow (came up for breath), he holler, "Ber Goat, Ber Goat, jes' touch Cat hawn dar."

Ber Cat say, "Fer Gawd sake don'."

Ber Cow say, "Huff 'im overboa'd, huff 'im overboa'd."

Den dey was mos' scan'lous 'citemen' on de picnic boat, en all de hawn animals cotch holt ob Ber Cat, en tuk 'im by de hin' laig en huff i'm overboa'd, en den dey stan' hol'in dey sides en laughin' at de way he done swim to de shoah.

Twel dat time Ber Cat en Ber Dawg was de mos' bes' ob frien's, but sence den dey ain't sca'cely on speakin' 'quaintance wit' each oder, en Ber Cat ain't like de wattah no mo'.

*Billy, Billy Ben, now my story's en' ;*

*Ef yo' don' b'lieve it true,*

*Ask de capt'n ob de long-boat crew.*

Ned's mellow voice ceased, and for some minutes neither of us spoke.

"Yo' ain't nebber heah dat befo'?" he asked anxiously.

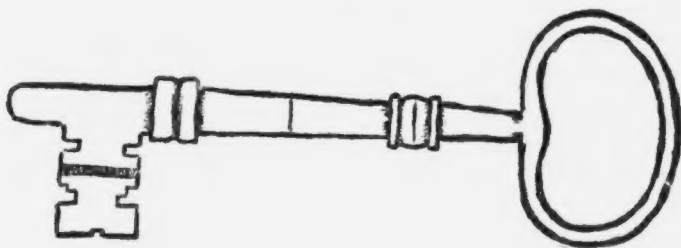
"No, Ned, never," I answered. "You'll tell me more to-morrow night won't you?"

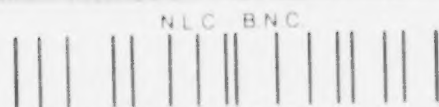
"S'pose," he said. "Well, goo'night! My ma'll be lockin' me out ef I don' git home. What time I's come to-morrow?"

"At moonrise," I answered, nodding good-night to him.

Then I must have dozed, for it seemed but a moment till the "Richmond's" bell clanged sharply eight times.

"Midnight," I thought, starting up. "Why, I, too, shall be locked out if I don't have a care."





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